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Adams Admits Concern About CBS Program

Westmoreland Suit Enters 15th Week

By Eleanor Randolph
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NEW YORK, Jan. 21—Codefendant Samuel A. Adams acknowledged today that shortly before a CBS documentary went on the air in 1982, he was concerned about a "major problem" with the show because it "seems to pin the rap on Gen. [William C.] Westmoreland when it probably belongs higher than that."

However, as Westmoreland's libel trial entered its 15th week, Adams said that what he meant in a letter written before the show was that the "command responsibility" for what he called "falsification" of military intelligence in Vietnam in 1967 went higher than Westmoreland.

In addition, Adams, a former Central Intelligence Agency analyst who served as a consultant for the broadcast, said his January 1982 letter to retired Army colonel Gains Hawkins, who was interviewed for the show, meant to say, in essence, that Westmoreland was the commander "responsible for what his subordinates had done even though he did not know every detail."

Adams said he and codefendant George Crile, who produced the show, suspected that Westmoreland's superiors were pressuring him in 1967 to come up with "legitimate good news" on the Vietnam war, which was beginning to cause political problems for President Lyndon B. Johnson.

But Adams said Westmoreland, then-National Security Affairs Adviser Walt W. Rostow and others denied that the White House had applied pressure, "so we went with the evidence we had."

The question of whether Adams believed that the show was accurate is crucial because, to win the case, Westmoreland must prove not only that the show was false but that the makers of the program, including Adams, knew it was false or had "reckless disregard" for whether it was true.

Moreover, the letter could be important to Westmoreland since his lawyers have said the CBS show was damaging because it accused the general of trying to keep vital military intelligence from his superiors, including the president, a breach of duty for a military man.

Still, Adams said he stood solidly behind the broadcast. At one point, he read a note he sent Crile before the show aired, saying he believed that it was "absolutely superb. No problems at all."

The program, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception," charged that Westmoreland was part of a "conspiracy" to suppress intelligence on higher enemy troop levels in 1967 to maintain support for the war.

Asked by Westmoreland lawyer David M. Dorsen whether he had told author Don Kowet after the broadcast that he was "uneasy" about CBS's use of the word "conspiracy," Adams replied, "I would be more comfortable with other words . . . I would describe it as 'a tragic event.'"

However, he added that several times he had told Kowet, author of a critical book about the broadcast, that "I believed it was a conspiracy"

by Westmoreland and others, as charged by CBS.

Adams, who occasionally grew irritated with Dorsen's questions, seemed particularly miffed when he was asked whether his theory of false intelligence in Vietnam, on which he has been writing and lecturing since 1967, has been "profitable" for him.

"No, it has not," Adams answered.

Adams, who left the CIA in 1973 to write and operate a farm in Loudoun County, Va., said that he received \$20,000 from W.W. Norton in 1976 to write a book on the issue, with an understanding that he would receive another \$20,000 if it was published.

CBS initially paid Adams \$25,000 as a consultant, and since Westmoreland filed his suit in September 1982, he said he has received per diem payments of \$200 a day plus expenses. Adams added that he has requested about \$12,000 in per diem payments and expenses but that he has not finished the paper work for "easily 100 days" more.

Adams said that preparing for the lawsuit has been "virtually a full-time job."